

**Bridgwater  
& Taunton  
College Trust**



**SUPPORTING GREAT TEACHERS**



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## PETER ELLIOTT

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WE KNOW THAT WHAT YOU  
DO CHANGES LIVES

The Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust is a charitable schools trust that exists with the single legal and moral purpose: to advance education for public benefit.

This means we are a group of likeminded schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards within and beyond our own schools. Our core purpose is to ensure that **Every Child Achieves**.

Here at the BTCT we know that every one of our colleagues understands and believes in our mission that Every Child Achieves. Easy words to write, more difficult in practice to bring about. We know that our success in achieving this aim is only possible as a result of developing and nurturing the very best staff team possible. Myself and the team of headteachers that lead our schools also know that teaching is an incredibly difficult and demanding profession. It takes hard work, skill and a particular set of talents to be able to enthuse and inspire our children day after day. Let's not forget that we work in some of the most challenging settings in the south west. We know the difficulties of teaching in rural, isolated settings and coastal towns in addition to the deprivation that we see in parts of Bridgwater and South Somerset.

We can only do this by ensuring that we look after the teachers who are tasked with the responsibility of preparing our students for adulthood. We know that you all take this responsibility seriously and everyday we see you going above and beyond to ensure that our students thrive.

On behalf of the Trust Board and the team of Headteachers I would like to thank you for all of your hard work, discretionary efforts and dedication to our children.

It is crucially important therefore, given the importance of what you do, that we as a Trust look carefully at how we can help you to be even more successful. Teacher workload is a serious issue, and so is teacher well-being. We know that the hours we put into the job in our profession are high and we are constantly looking at how we can attempt to reduce your workload without undermining the quality of what you do or watering down the impact that you have on changing the lives of young people. This year we've been increasingly thinking about your well-being as well and how we can support your further.

This document therefore sets out what we already do as a Trust to reduce the burdens placed upon you and it also sets out what we think our next steps will be to reduce this even further. If you have any suggestions about how we can help reduce the burdens placed upon you, please do get in touch.

Thank you for all that you do to touch and change the lives of our students for the better.

# Supporting Great Teachers

- We think that teachers should be fairly paid. At the BTCT, for the past two years, all teachers have received the same, above national, pay award. UPS teachers at the BTCT earn almost 3% more than in maintained schools. We know how hard you work and you deserve it.
- We have ensured that there is a sensible feedback policy in each of our Academies. No more countless hours pointlessly marking hundreds of books—just because.
- We proactively support flexible working, especially for staff with young children. There is no culture of presenteeism in our Academies.
- We fully support a results based approach to working—this means you do what you need to do, when and where you need to do it.
- We trust you to get on with the job of teaching within the context of our shared values. Therefore we give you autonomy in your teaching and don't micro manage what you do.
- We have thrown out performance related pay because we know that it doesn't work. So long as you meet our agreed standards for teaching and engage proactively in professional development—you progress up the pay spine.
- You don't have to wait to get to M6 to progress through the threshold. So long as you can demonstrate that you meet the standards for teaching at this level over time, you can progress through.

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EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES

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- We try to act with pace—when there is an issue, we tackle it fast and get it sorted quickly.
- We know that nationally, the reason most people leave our profession is because of the demands that poor behaviour places on our teachers. In all of our academies we have really strong and clear policies in place to support good behaviour. All of our Senior Leadership Team Colleagues are high visibility and proactive in supporting you.
- There is no expectation that staff will read/respond to email outside of their working hours. Whilst some colleagues prefer to work at these times, there is no expectation that we are checking email at all hours of the day
- We encourage you to share resources across your teams and co-create. Our Central Colleagues are leading curriculum and resource development—especially at Primary.
- We always pay you for those ‘emergency’ days when they are needed and if things go wrong at home. We also always pay for funerals and medical appointments.
- We always give new parents two weeks paid parental leave instead of one—which you can take flexibly too because we know how hard becoming a parent is.
- We don’t have any Trust or Academy wide lesson plan formats or silly rules about submitting your lesson plans each week.
- All of our academies have fantastic admin support. All of your letters are checked, processed, addressed and posted centrally by the admin teams.
- We have scrapped the antiquated and time heavy process called Performance Management—which included pointless lesson grading! We now have a focus on Growing Great Teachers which just looks to make all teachers better.
- All of our lesson observations are low-stakes with no grading. Observation is about feedback and professional curiosity, not making judgements about effectiveness.





- All of our academies have access to our Trust wide data lead. You don't have to crunch the numbers or do the maths—this gets done for you. Results analysis documents are prepopulated for subject and phase leaders
  - Almost all of our academies have opted for a two week break in October. It's the longest term of the year and you need a decent break to be able to rest and recover.
  - All of our academies have a Staff Association Fund which provides flowers and gifts to mark those special occasions with you.
  - Most of our academies run a system of centralised detentions which takes the pressure away from you as teachers.
  - There are no lunchtime duties for teachers unless they opt to do one or have leadership responsibilities.
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- On days when you have to stay late for things like parents' evenings, we provide you with a free lunch to make sure you've had the chance to eat.
  - All of our SLT still teach or cover lessons to spread the load and stay firmly 'in the game.'
  - We've evolved our Peer Review process which is now called 'Growing Great Schools' so that it happens early in the academic year and is genuinely a supportive process for teachers and leadership colleagues—no judgements are made here.
  - In our academies where we run 'work scrutiny' processes this is led by departments and is based on professional curiosity and not a 'checking up' exercise.
  - There is a bespoke and targeted approach to CPD. It's not knee jerk initiatives being rolled out week after week but a planned, joined up approach to your professional growth. The CPD offer is planned well in advance and based on need.
  - All of our Academies have ditched written reports for parents at the end of the academic year.
  - There is excellent on-site ICT support. The IT support team has grown by 25% this year and next year all of our schools will be connected to the same network making sharing resources even easier.
  - We've spent over £16 million on our buildings over the past 5 years to make sure that they are warm, clean and nice places to learn and work. This includes a new barn at Brymore, new science and humanities classrooms at BCA, new heating, lighting and roofing projects at WSC.
  - Last year we streamlined assessment processes across Primary so that there are common assessments taken at the same time. Teachers don't have to waste time writing assessments. This means you can focus your time on planning your lessons to respond to student needs.



# Supporting Great Teachers



- Last year we published our Leadership Qualities Framework. For those of you keen to progress into leadership roles, this sets out the skills, behaviours and traits that we hope to support you develop to enable you to progress your career.
- For many leadership roles we seek to appoint internally with our own colleagues first. We know that we have hugely talented colleagues and that career development is important to you.
- We offer all colleagues access to CareFirst. This is a free, confidential advice, information and counselling service open 24 hours a day—0800 174 319.
- Most of our Academies have a staff forum—this is a really useful mechanism for staff to raise and share concerns with leadership so that they can be addressed.
- Most of our Academies provide free tea and coffee for teaching staff.
- All of our Headteachers offer an ‘open door’ policy and work with you in an open and transparent way.
- Every year we conduct a Trust wide staff survey so that we can assess how we can make further improvements.
- Locally, staff are consulted on the big decisions—like term dates, and changes to the school day.
- Last year we developed a series of Trust wide curricula to support teachers with their planning—this was especially the case in Geography and History across the primary phase. This year we plan to follow this up by developing a Trust wide Sex and Relationships Curriculum which we are required to teach from 2020. This should save time for all teaching staff.

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THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

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